

Cleaning your Teeth

Story By: Andrew Frinkle



John used to brush his teeth once, just before bed. The dentist always bugged him to do it at least twice a day, but it was annoying to wake up and brush his teeth before he ate. He was hungry and just wanted to eat.

Then, his mother complained about his morning breath one day. “It smells like I have an evil dragon for a son!” She lamented. The embarrassment of having his mother say such a thing got him to brush his teeth in the morning. Now he was up to twice a day, but he still hated flossing.

Flossing hurt. It squeezed his fingers almost to death when he wrapped the floss around his fingertips. Then he had to slide it between his teeth, usually cutting up his gums to the point where he spit out blood. It was gross and uncomfortable, and the next day it ached.

Then he saw his friend using flossers with relative ease. Flossers didn’t pinch your fingertips, because the floss was on a plastic holder. They went in easy and weren’t nearly as bad. What’s more, his friend told him, “You’ll be scared of how much the floss stinks when you pull out old food your toothbrush misses. It’s gross!”

Indeed it was. He smelled the floss that pulled old food out of his back teeth, and it smelled like something rotten. To think he’d had that stuff in his mouth and didn’t even know about it. That was nasty! Yet, he still didn’t like gargling.

Once he got a little older, his older sister, who was in high school, explained to him, “No girl is ever going to want to smooch you if you don’t gargle.” He was only in the fourth grade, so he wasn’t too worried about that yet, but he thought he might some day. So, he tried gargling with mouthwash, and while he didn’t like the flavor much, he did like how cool and fresh his mouth felt afterward.

And you know what? His dentist visits were having fewer problems too. He stopped getting cavities, which meant less painful drilling, and the dentist was always telling him he was doing a good job with his mouth. He was proud of his smile!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What doesn't John like to do?
 - A. clean his teeth
 - B. clean his room
 - C. clean the garage
 - D. clean his locker

2. Who convinces John to brush his teeth more?
 - A. His friend
 - B. His mother
 - C. His dentist
 - D. His sister

3. Who convinces John to floss his teeth more?
 - A. His friend
 - B. His mother
 - C. His dentist
 - D. His sister

4. Who convinces John to gargle more?
 - A. His friend
 - B. His mother
 - C. His dentist
 - D. His sister

5. How do John's dentist visits go after he starts taking care of his teeth?
 - A. No change
 - B. More cavities
 - C. Less cavities and pain
 - D. Less fun

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